

As a consumer, I am not willing to pay for additional equipment and services that limit my fair use rights to broadcast signals. I demand the ability to record broadcasts for my own personal and private use, primarily time-shifting.

As one of hundreds of thousands of taxpayers and registered voters who must commute more than two hours each day, my only opportunity to enjoy most TV and CATV programming is to record and watch it at a more convenient time. For example, I record the 5PM news to watch when I get home at 7:30PM. I record my favorite weeknight shows to watch during the weekend, leaving my weeknights free for my children or sleep.

I consider this ability an irrevocable civil right. I already pay my CATV provider, who in turn pays the networks and programmers for content. The networks/programmers gain further revenue through advertising sales, which benefits from my viewership regardless of how and when I see the ads. That the industry has not changed their advertising sales model to account for time-shifting and repeat viewers is their failing, not mine.

If broadcasters refuse to provide HDTV programming without copy protection than so be it. I see absolutely nothing wrong with the current broadcast quality, and am not willing to exchange my ability to time-shift or replay broadcast programming for the ability to view the nightly news or sitcom at 720p. In fact, I believe it would be good for the industry if some of the major networks did not broadcast HDTV: it would provide an opportunity for new (and, hopefully, more interesting) programmers to enter the market.

I believe that, give a choice, the majority of consumers would not be willing to give up their fair use rights in exchange for the promise of better quality images. However, if you cave in to the monopolistic demands of a few major networks, you will never learn the answer. Leave off HDTV copy protection for now and see what develops with the market, whether that is with or without the big networks.